

THE BOOK OF RUTH

Elimelech's Family Goes to Moab

1 In the days when the judges ruled there was a famine in the land, and a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. ²The name of the man was Elim'elech and the name of his wife Na'omi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chil'ion; they were Eph'rathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there. ³But Elim'elech, the husband of Na'omi, died, and she was left with her two sons. ⁴These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. They lived there about ten years; ⁵and both Mahlon and Chil'ion died, so that the woman was bereft of her two sons and her husband.

Naomi and Her Moabite Daughters-in-law

⁶Then she started with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the **LORD** had visited his people and given them food. ⁷So she set out from the place where she was, with her two daughters-in-law, and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah. ⁸But Na'omi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each of you to her mother's house. May the **LORD** deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. ⁹The **LORD** grant that you may find a home, each of you in the house of her husband!" Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. ¹⁰And they said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people." ¹¹But Na'omi said, "Turn back, my daughters, why will you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? ¹²Turn back, my daughters, go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, even if I should have a husband this night and should bear sons, ¹³would you therefore wait till they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, for it is exceedingly bitter to me for your sake that the hand of the **LORD** has gone forth against me." ¹⁴Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

¹⁵And she said, "See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." ¹⁶But Ruth said, "Entreat me not to leave you or to return from following

you; for where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God; ¹⁷where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the **LORD** do so to me and more also if even death parts me from you." ¹⁸And when Na'omi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more.

¹⁹So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. And when they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them; and the women said, "Is this Na'omi?" ²⁰She said to them, "Do not call me Na'omi, ^acall me Mara, ^bfor the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. ²¹I went away full, and the **LORD** has brought me back empty. Why call me Na'omi, when the **LORD** has afflicted ^cme and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me?"

²²So Na'omi returned, and Ruth the Moabite with her, who returned from the country of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.

Ruth Meets Boaz

2 Now Na'omi had a kinsman of her husband's, a man of wealth, of the family of Elim'elech, whose name was Boaz. ²And Ruth the Moabite said to Na'omi, "Let me go to the field, and glean among the ears of grain after him in whose sight I shall find favor." And she said to her, "Go, my daughter." ³So she set forth and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers; and she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elim'elech. ⁴And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem; and he said to the reapers, "The **LORD** be with you!" And they answered, "The **LORD** bless you." ⁵Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose maiden is this?" ⁶And the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered, "It is the Moabite maiden, who came back with Na'omi from the country of Moab."

This charming tale of family life in the countryside of Bethlehem during the period of the judges is imbued with a deeply religious spirit. It is a story of family devotion and of piety toward one's ancestors. The book has significance for the ancestry of David and the Messiah. Though Jewish in feeling, it is not narrowly so; indeed, Boaz goes beyond what is strictly required by the law and, though the book insists that Israel's faith must remain uncontaminated, yet it also says it must be made available to all. The call of the Gentiles is foreseen. There is no certainty about the date of the book. It was probably written during the period of the kingship, though some think it was composed after the Exile.

^aThat is *Pleasant*.

^bThat is *Bitter*.

^cGk Syr Vg: Heb *testified against*.

⁷She said, 'Please, let me glean and gather among the sheaves after the reapers.' So she came, and she has continued from early morning until now, without resting even for a moment."^a

⁸Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Now, listen, my daughter, do not go to glean in another field or leave this one, but keep close to my maidens.

⁹Let your eyes be upon the field which they are reaping, and go after them. Have I not charged the young men not to molest you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink what the young men have drawn."¹⁰Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, when I am a foreigner?" ¹¹But Boaz answered her, "All that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told me, and how you left your father and mother and your native land and came to a people that you did not know before.

¹²The **LORD** recompense you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the **LORD**, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!" ¹³Then she said, "You are most gracious to me, my lord, for you have comforted me and spoken kindly to your maidservant, though I am not one of your maidservants."

¹⁴And at mealtime Boaz said to her, "Come here, and eat some bread, and dip your morsel in the wine." So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed to her parched grain; and she ate until she was satisfied, and she had some left over. ¹⁵When she rose to glean, Boaz instructed his young men, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her." ¹⁶And also pull out some from the bundles for her, and leave it for her to glean, and do not rebuke her."

¹⁷So she gleaned in the field until evening; then she beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley. ¹⁸And she took it up and went into the city; she showed her mother-in-law what she had gleaned, and she also brought out and gave her what food she had left over after being satisfied. ¹⁹And her mother-in-law said to her, "Where did you glean today? And where have you worked? Blessed be the man who took notice of you." So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked, and said, "The name of the man with whom I worked today is Boaz." ²⁰And Na'omi said to her daughter-in-law, "Blessed be he by the **LORD**, whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead!" Na'omi also said to her, "The man is a relative of ours, one of our nearest kin."

²¹And Ruth the Moabitess said, "Besides, he said to me, 'You shall keep close by my servants, till they have finished all my harvest.'" ²²And Na'omi said to Ruth, her daughter-in-law, "It is well, my daughter, that you go out with his maidens, lest in another field you be molested." ²³So she kept close

to the maidens of Boaz, gleaned until the end of the barley and wheat harvests; and she lived with her mother-in-law.

Ruth and Boaz at the Threshing Floor

3 Then Na'omi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, should I not seek a home for you, that it may be well with you? ²Now is not Boaz our kinsman, with whose maidens you were? See, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. ³Wash therefore and anoint yourself, and put on your best clothes and go down to the threshing floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. ⁴But when he lies down, observe the place where he lies; then, go and uncover his feet and lie down; and he will tell you what to do." ⁵And she replied, "All that you say I will do."

⁶So she went down to the threshing floor and did just as her mother-in-law had told her. ⁷And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain. Then she came softly, and uncovered his feet, and lay down. ⁸At midnight the man was startled, and turned over, and behold, a woman lay at his feet! ⁹He said, "Who are you?" And she answered, "I am Ruth, your maidservant; spread your garment over your maidservant, for you are next of kin." ¹⁰And he said, "May you be blessed by the **LORD**, my daughter; you have made this last kindness greater than the first, in that you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich. ¹¹And now, my daughter, do not fear, I will do for you all that you ask, for all my fellow townsmen know that you are a woman of worth. ¹²And now it is true that I am a near kinsman, yet there is a kinsman nearer than I. ¹³Remain this night, and in the morning, if he will do the part of the next of kin for you, well; let him do it; but if he is not willing to do the part of the next of kin for you, then, as the **LORD** lives, I will do the part of the next of kin for you. Lie down until the morning."

¹⁴So she lay at his feet until the morning, but arose before one could recognize another; and he said, "Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor." ¹⁵And he said, "Bring the mantle you are wearing and hold it out." So she held it, and he measured out six measures of barley, and laid it upon her; then she went into the city. ¹⁶And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, "How did you fare, my daughter?" Then she told her all that the man had done for her, ¹⁷saying, "These six measures of barley he gave to me, for he said, 'You must not go back empty-handed to your mother-in-law.'" ¹⁸She replied, "Wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out, for the man will not rest, but will settle the matter today."

^aCompare Gk Vg: the meaning of the Hebrew text is uncertain.

The Marriage of Boaz and Ruth

4 And Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there; and behold, the next of kin, of whom Boaz had spoken, came by. So Boaz said, "Turn aside, friend; sit down here"; and he turned aside and sat down. ²And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, "Sit down here"; so they sat down. ³Then he said to the next of kin, "Na'omi, who has come back from the country of Moab, is selling the parcel of land which belonged to our kinsman Elim'elech. ⁴So I thought I would tell you of it, and say, Buy it in the presence of those sitting here, and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, redeem it; but if you will not, tell me, that I may know, for there is no one besides you to redeem it, and I come after you." And he said, "I will redeem it." ⁵Then Boaz said, "The day you buy the field from the hand of Na'omi, you are also buying Ruth* the Moabite, the widow of the dead, in order to restore the name of the dead to his inheritance." ⁶Then the next of kin said, "I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I impair my own inheritance. Take my right of redemption yourself, for I cannot redeem it."

⁷Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging: to confirm a transaction, the one drew off his sandal and gave it to the other, and this was the manner of attesting in Israel. ⁸So when the next of kin said to Boaz, "Buy it for yourself," he drew off his sandal. ⁹Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses this day that I have bought from the hand of Na'omi all that belonged to Elim'elech and all that belonged to Chil'ion and to Mahlon. ¹⁰Also Ruth the Moabite, the widow of Mahlon, I have bought to be my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead in his

inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from the gate of his native place; you are witnesses this day." ¹¹Then all the people who were at the gate, and the elders, said, "We are witnesses. May the **LORD** make the woman, who is coming into your house, like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel. May you prosper in Eph'rathah and be renowned in Bethlehem; ¹²and may your house be like the house of Per'ez, whom Ta'mar bore to Judah, because of the children that the **LORD** will give you by this young woman."

The Genealogy of David

¹³So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife; and he went in to her, and the **LORD** gave her conception, and she bore a son. ¹⁴Then the women said to Na'omi, "Blessed be the **LORD**, who has not left you this day without next of kin; and may his name be renowned in Israel!" ¹⁵He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has borne him." ¹⁶Then Na'omi took the child and laid him in her bosom, and became his nurse. ¹⁷And the women of the neighborhood gave him a name, saying, "A son has been born to Na'omi." They named him O'bed; he was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

¹⁸Now these are the descendants of Per'ez: Perez was the father of Hezron, ¹⁹Hezron of Ram, Ram of Ammin'adab, ²⁰Ammin'adab of Nahshon, Nahshon of Salmon, ²¹Salmon of Boaz, Boaz of O'bed, ²²O'bed of Jesse, and Jesse of David.

*Old Latin Vg: Heb of Naomi and from Ruth.
4:7: Deut 25:8-10.